

ORIGINAL

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

In the Matter of)
)
Petition of the)
Community Broadcasters Association) **RM-9260**
For Establishment of a "Class A")
Television Service)

To: The Commission - Mail Stop 1170

COMMENTS OF KENTUCKY NEW ERA, INC.

These Comments are filed by Kentucky New Era, Inc., operator of low power television station WKAG-LP, licensed to Hopkinsville, KY.

Since 1984, WKAG has operated in a manner similar to many full service broadcasters, and with results that exceeded many of them. *(Full service being a misnomer, as many of them are glorified translators. The term full power is more applicable)* We have always done so with the specter of secondary status meaning that we could lose our spectrum whenever the FCC recalled it.

WKAG fully supports the efforts of the Community Broadcasters Association in the establishment of a "Class A" television service. We feel that this would encourage capital investment in new stations, establish more localism and generally provide a better broadcast product for the consumer, as well as a better business opportunity for the broadcaster. This will also lead to more involvement for minorities, as the Class A status will make these stations a legitimate business investment.

The ownership of our station has always been committed to serving the community first.

No. of Copies rec'd
USABCDE

049

MMR

Because of this, they put far more resources (*both in money and physically*) into our television station than most companies. We have been able to make many inroads into broadcasting that were not available to many other LPTV operators.

Many LPTV stations service those areas that most full service broadcasters ignore, that area that is less populated, and over 45 minutes from the center of the DMA. We might as well be on the moon, because with less population, there is less business, and with the exception of times during disasters, areas such as ours rarely see truly local service from the full service broadcasters.

We offer our viewers local news on a day to day basis. We offer a two hour morning show and five thirty minute newscasts per evening. When breaking events happen in our community, we go live for extended periods. We offer political forums, from the local level all the way to Congressional and US Senate. In 1997, we expanded by opening a news bureau in Clarksville, Tennessee. Without our day to day reporting, these areas would be virtually unserved by television broadcast.

The impact of TV43 on our area is probably best illustrated by an incident that happened at Ft. Campbell, right before the Gulf War. Ft. Campbell sits about thirteen miles from our studios. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, there was much speculation and concern locally regarding whether the 101st Airborne would serve in any hostilities. Not only were area citizens concerned about the well being and safety of over 20,000 soldiers and their families, but there would be a tremendous financial impact on our communities.

When General Binford Peay made an official announcement stating that the 101st would be shipping out, he made it to the local media only. He did this, because he felt that the Nashville media did not care on a day to day basis about what went on at the post, and that the television,

newspaper and radio media which served Ft. Campbell had a right to know first. TV43 was the only television station granted access to this press conference, and was the first to air General Peay's comments about the action

During the Gulf War, TV43 participated in a food drive with our parent company to help the families of those soldiers serving in the Gulf. Many baskets of food were raised and TV43 received extensive recognition for these efforts.

Our ongoing news effort has also been met with success by our peers. We frequently enter contests for news sponsored by the Associated Press and the Kentucky Broadcasters Association. Over the past two years, we have won more awards than any television station in our state, and we are the only low power television station in the competition. In our class, we compete with those stations in Paducah, Bowling Green, Ashland and other areas with full service broadcasters. Our crowning achievement occurred in 1996, as we were named Kentucky's best newscast! This was not a low power TV competition, but a full service TV competition, won by a **Low Power Broadcaster**.

We have been able to assist our communities not only in times of crisis, but during good times as well. TV43 frequently broadcasts fund raisers for several organizations, including the **spouse abuse center, Crimestoppers** and **Rotary Auction** for the student loan fund. The Rotary Auction is the largest single fund raiser of any Rotary Club anywhere, and regularly allows for low interest loans for Christian County students to further their education. In 1998, over \$250,000 was raised during this six night auction. As a result, over 250 students annually benefit. This auction raised only about \$50,000 a year before we began televising it. With it's success, it has been copied in several locations around the country, with amazing results and more students benefitting.

These are but a few of the fund raising efforts that we are involved in. There are many others involving our local **Habitat For Humanity, Chamber of Commerce, Austin Peay State University**, local schools and others.

Many young people in our community have been able to see themselves on various programs produced by TV43. Each year, we air high school graduations from fourteen different high schools. We also air high school sports, including football and basketball. These sports would never be seen on television were it not for LPTV broadcasters like TV43 and others.

During the Christmas season each year, the Army provides us with holiday greeting tapes from Ft. Campbell soldiers stationed all around the world. We are happy to air these as a segment in our newscasts, giving the "home folks" a glimpse of their family member.

We are proud of the amount of local programming that we offer. We have a wall full of plaques from organizations in our community, thanking us for helping them reach their goals. We believe that more stations can do the same if given the chance. The Class A proposal is a start in the right direction.

By allowing us to increase ERP to new non-interfering levels, stations are able to better saturate their areas, and we in no way affect existing full service broadcast stations. This is a win-win situation for the communities the LPTV industry serves. They win because their current full service stations are allowed to make the digital transition without interference, and they win because of increased performance and stability in the local LPTV stations.

The CBA has spent much time and labor studying the effects that this proposal will have. It means a stronger industry, not only low power broadcasting, but for broadcasting in general. Any stations that you allow to become Class A will not be receiving a hand out. Any station qualifying for Class A will earn their way there. I thank you for considering this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,
Kentucky New Era, Inc.

Signed: Edward Owen

Date: May 20, 1998

Printed name & title: Edward Owen - GM - WKAG - LP

WKAG-LP
Edward Owen (owen@wkag.com)
P.O. Box 4300
Hopkinsville, KY 42241-4300
502-885-4300; fax 502-886-5882